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ABSTRACT

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that seeks answers to two main questions: How do we know? and How do we know we know? This paper is concerned with how four major schools of thought have addressed these questions and the implications that their answers to these questions have for education. The paper begins by discussing how four major schools of thought -- rationalism, empiricism, pragmatism, and Judeo-Christian religion -- have sought to answer questions about the foundations of knowledge. The answers each of these schools offer to epistemological questions are limited. As an alternative, the study of knowledge must begin with two basic "givens" -- the universe in its orderly form and the uniqueness of man. A system that can explain these two givens will be inclusive enough to provide explanations for more particular questions. The Bible presents such an explanation. The Bible presents an explanation of the creation of the world in Genesis, an explanation that accounts for the world in all its complexity. The Bible also explains the uniqueness of man as being created by God in His image. Man can know absolute truth because God communicated with man whom He made. This truth has limitations, and yet it is sufficient to enable men to function in the physical world of God's creation. The implications of this theory for education fall into three broad areas: (a) a proper view of responsibility for education; (b) a proper view of truth; and (c) a proper view of man, individually and socially. A 23-item list of references is included. (DB)

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The Basic Epistemological Questions -- Are There Also Valid Answers?

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The Basic Epistemological Questions --
Are There Also Valid Answers?

Introduction

We speak of optimists as ones who look at the world through rose-colored glasses. They approach life and its situations from the bright side; their glass is always half full, not half empty. All of us look at the world through "tinted" glasses. We define the tint in our perspective as our world view or our philosophy of life. Our philosophy colors all we do, say, and think. In fact, we act more consistently with our world view than we even realize.

Mankind has created many different schools of philosophic thought. To validate our own world view, I submit we must have a system that meets three criteria. First, it must explain the origin and form of all that exists. Second, it must explain the uniqueness of man. Third, it must have valid answers in the area of epistemology. This paper will address this third criteria.

Epistemology basically answers two questions: how do we know and how do we know we know? Many responses have been formulated; however, I think most people do not carefully consider these questions or their answers. Rather they live life borrowing someone else's tinted glasses without ever developing their own answers or at least confirming another person's answers to these difficult questions. Without knowing it, they have blindly accepted some view along the way and <u>assume</u> it's true without even being able to explain it.

A teacher who does this makes an unwitting error. He does not grasp firmly this most basic concept, and as a result, he teaches from an unprincipled base. For him, knowledge is the information appearing in the provided curriculum, which he and his students are to accept uncritically. From this he talks about the particulars of this world without knowing or being able to explain the universal system in which the particulars exist. That's similar to teaching someone to drive a car without ever mentioning traffic laws. Vehicle operators, who never heed traffic lights, who do not know the proper side of the road for driving, etc., can not drive safely regardless of how well they can use a clutch, gas pedal and steering wheel.

Men have developed varying answers to the basic epistemological questions. Is there a right answer or should we accept any view as long as it is sincerely held, consistently applied, and serving some "useful" purpose? Or do we need some basic, all-inclusive, but vague position, which is palatable to everyone? Where do we look for such answers? From men? From the world around us? From some other source? If the answer is another source, what is the other source? And, of course, why should we trust whatever source is chosen?

Answers to these questions have considerable implications for education, whose very "bread and butter" is knowledge. Everyone communicates from his own world view. This includes teachers, students, textbook writers and publishers, and the boards of education at all levels. Everything taught is based on someone's epistemology. Before evaluating answers to the two

basic questions and their implications, I will explain proposed responses given by four schools of thought: rationalism, empiricism, pragmatism and the Judeo-Christian religion.

Discussion

Rationalism and Reason

Rationalism, which began to be codified by the early Greeks like Plato, holds that "knowledge is essentially a knowledge of universals and that these are known by the mind and not by the senses." (Wartofsky, 1971, p. 422) The senses have a part to play to be sure; however, "a rationalist argues that the raw data of sensation must be organized by the mind into meaningful patterns before anything worthy of the name 'knowledge' appears." (Smith, 1964, p. 93) In order to understand the individual things in this world (particulars), you must know the general framework (universals) within which the particulars exist. You come to know these by reason -- the ability to think logically and draw conclusions.

Rationalism continued as the dominant viewpoint for many centuries after the Greeks. It had much importance in education during the Middle Ages with "very heavy emphasis" on "abstract, non-empirical subjects -- logic, mathematics, grammar." (Shermis, 1967, p. 171) During the Renaissance Leonardo da Vinci exemplified the rationalist by searching for the universals in mathematics and painting. (Schaeffer, 1972) Rationalism greatly influenced three 17th century mathematician-philosophers: Descartes, Leibnitz and Spinoza. They believed that the universal truth to explain the particulars could be found in

mathematics, and so in mathematics they sought the unity for all knowledge. (Moore, 1982)

A key rationalist assumption is you can not trust knowledge which comes from the senses. Perceived objects change. Our observation changes. Our sensory perceptions are limited. Therefore, we must think, reflect, and contemplate to discover the unchanging principles and truths. (Shermis, 1967; Smith, 1964) As Descartes said:

> We must begin with the rational soul, for all our knowledge resides in it....I find it strange that men are so credulous as to base their knowledge on the certitude of the senses, when everyone knows that they are sometimes deceptive, and that we have good reason always to distrust those who have deceived us even once. (Cottingham, 1641/1984, p. 405 & 407)

One logical method for thinking is the deductive process. In using this method you construct a syllogism. From a major premise and a minor premise, you draw a conclusion which then explains a specific situation. (Shermis, 1967) For example, your major and minor premises might be respectively, all animals with feathers are birds, and the animal outside the window has feathers. From those premises, you conclude you see a bird.

Intuition, another source of rationalistic knowledge, is "direct and immediate knowledge without the intermediary of either sense perception or conscious thought." (Shermis, 1967, p. 171) Intuition is strictly internal; it begins with a faint stimulus within, probably based on past experience, which then triggers an immediate response. For example, if a mother playing

host to several six-year old children in her home heard silence for several minutes, her intuition would be quickly aroused.

Empiricism and the Senses

A view contrary to rationalism is empiricism. According to this view knowledge is "acquired by means of sense perception, experience or practical and empirical activity. There is nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses." (Wartofsky, 1971, p. 422) In empiricism, truth comes only from the senses, whereas in rationalism, truth comes only from reason. (Moore, 1982; Shermis, 1967; Smith, 1964)

This view appeared in the 18th century in the writings of John Locke. Locke believed the human mind at birth was a clean slate; innate ideas do not exist in the minds of men.

> It is an established opinion amongst some men that there are in the understanding, certain innate principles, some primary notions...as it were, stamped upon the mind of man, which the soul receives in its very first being...It would be sufficient to convince unprejudiced readers of the falseness of this supposition, if I should only show...how men barely by the use of their natural faculties, may attain to all the knowledge they have, without the help of any innate impressions, and may arrive at certainty, without any such original notions or principles. (Locke, 1961, Vol I, p. 9)

Everything inscribed on the mind after birth came from sensory perception. Man takes these simple sensory observations and organizes them into more complex ideas. Since everything comes

from our senses, both the simple and complex ideas reflect reality. (Smith, 1964) According to MacDonald (1965), Locke thought the particulars in the external world had "primary and secondary qualities." Primary qualities "inhere in the object itself," having "independent status" like "size, shape, and solidity." Secondary qualities "depend for their existence on a perceiving mind" -- qualities like "color, sounds, tastes, smells." "Ultimate reality can never itself be known -- only the primary and secondary qualities can become the object of knowledge." (p. 228)

Irish philosopher, Bishop George Berkeley, further developed this idea, but disagreed with the unknowableness of ultimate reality. He broke down the distinction between primary and secondary qualities. "For all objects whatsoever...their being consists in their being perceived." (MacDonald, 1965, p. 228)

Following Berkeley, David Hume, a Scottish philosopher, went even further. He denied causality. According to Moore (1982), Hume thought we "project a kind of necessity into our account of the world. Our regular and uniform experiences lead us to expect events to occur as they do, although we have no other warrant for this expectation than our previous experience." (p. 45)

The most fundamental concept of empiricism is this: All that can be known comes first through the senses, and only then can one proceed from the particulars to the universals. In this, it is the reverse of rationalism. This process uses the inductive method. For example, I note all the chocolate I have ever eaten is sweet. I will therefore induce that all chocolate

is probably sweet.

Pragmatism and the Scientific Method

A third school of thought is alternately called instrumentalism, relativism, experimentalism or pragmatism. "With respect to methods for gaining knowledge or warranted beliefs, pragmatism may be thought of as a synthesis of empiricism and rationalism." (Smith, 1964, p. 18) The emphasis, as implied by one of the names above for this system, is experimentation. For the pragmatist, "the objective of knowledge is not truth, in the sense of correspondence with an independent reality, but rather the adequacy of concepts and theories as instruments of action." (Wartofsky, 1971, p. 425)

Though its roots may go back further, pragmatism is generally understood to have originated in the 19th century as a result of the writings of some Americans, Charles Peirce and William James. Probably due to the number of works he wrote on the subject, pragmatism is largely associated with John Dewey. As far as epistemology is concerned, for the pragmatist "truth" is always in the making by constantly testing and refining one's hypotheses after new experiences. (Smith, 1964) A pragmatist tests for truth by inquiring what would be the practical consequences of acting in a certain way in a certain situation. Ideas should not be assumed to be true or false before they are tested. (Brubacher, 1950) "The final test of truth is the practical one: how will the proposition, belief, theory, or system work out if actually put into practice?" (MacDonald, 1965, p. 235) The pragmatist denies the subject-object dichotomy and

"turns to experience itself as the primitive, underived, or basic reality." (Smith, 1964, p. 89)

The pragmatist primarily concerns himself not with universal principles that have always been true, but rather with solving problems. (MacDonald, 1965) To do this he uses a five step method. First, you must sense a problem. Second, you locate and delimit precisely what the problem is. Third, you research empirical data that could be useful to a solution. Fourth, you predict the likely results of tentative options. Finally, you select your solution. Hopefully, that will work, and if so, then knowledge results. (Brubacher, 1950) This careful analysis which couples empirical data and rational thinking is called the scientific method, a process which predates pragmatism and was derived from the careful method used for scientific inquiry. (Shermis, 1967)

Judeo-Christianity and Revelation

The dictionary defines revelation as "the act of revealing or communicating divine truth, especially by divine agency or supernatural means." (Michaelis, 1963, p. 1150) Revelation serves as the basis for the Judeo-Christian philosophic position, and as such, has at one time or another had significant influence in Western culture. According to one author, it is the only source of knowledge which requires metaphysical belief. (Phenix, 1960) In accepting revelation as a means of knowing, "the assumption...is that there exists a higher power, usually called 'God' or the 'deity.'" (Shermis, 1967, p. 178)

Written accounts about revelation in the Judeo-Christian

tradition began in the Scriptures. Solomon (in Proverbs 1:7) wrote, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," indicating the importance of reverence for God as the foundation for true knowledge in the first place. (Lockman Foundation, 1973, p. OT-897) Jesus Christ (in John 8:31,32), referring to the Scriptures, called them "the truth." (Lockman Foundation, 1973, p. NT-155) Later Paul wrote (in II Timothy 3:16), "All Scripture is inspired by God," to show the authority of the Biblical writings. (Lockman Foundation, 1973, p. NT-327) To explain how God inspired the words of Scripture, Peter added (in II Peter 1:20,21), "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (Lockman Foundation, 1973, NT-361)

Over the years since apostolic times many important men in church history added commentary to this position. Augustine, in The Teacher, summarized with the following:

> Accordingly, we should no longer merely believe, but also begin to understand the truth of those words based on divine authority, that we should not call any man on earth a teacher, seeing that "there is One in heaven who is the Teacher of all." (Russell, 389/1968, p. 60)

Martin Luther and associates, Philip Melanchthon and Johann Bugenhagen, wrote much about education, and their writings emphasized knowledge of the Scriptures to be of paramount importance; they included other subjects in the curriculum, but

Scripture could not be neglected. (Eby, 1971) John Calvin, another Protestant reformer, held similar views:

> This, then must be considered as a fixed principle, that, in order to enjoy the light of true religion, we ought to begin with the doctrine of heaven; and that no man can have the least knowledge of true and sound doctrine, without having been a disciple of the Scripture. Hence originates all true wisdom, when we embrace with reverence the testimony which God hath been pleased therein to deliver concerning himself. (Eby, 1971, p. 240)

As can be seen, people holding the Judeo-Christian viewpoint place utmost importance on Biblical revelation because it explains the universal truths. These truths must be revealed by an infinite God since finite men can not discover them on their own. As mentioned above, the metaphysical position closely connects at this point because the Judeo-Christian says a personal God has always existed, He created all that exists in our finite world at a point in space and time, and He then communicated propositional truth to men in their own language. Thus, men have absolute truth (not exhaustive truth) in the Bible. The particulars then have meaning within this framework. (Schaeffer, 1979)

Analysis

In describing the differences between the four schools of thought, I have discussed some of their limitations just by covering contrary views. However, further limitations or problems exist which seem to cloud the possibility of clearly

answering the two basic questions initially posed in the introduction.

Rationalism

The deductive method can be flawed. Major premises may be false (or incomplete), which would lead to logically valid but false conclusions. (Shermis, 1967) For example, if I assert as a major premise that all Swedes have blond hair, and I then tell you Gustaf is a Swede, the logical conclusion becomes: Gustaf has blond hair. Clearly, as soon as the first Swede appears with different color hair or even no hair at all, my premise becomes invalid, and I may have a false conclusion about Gustaf.

Intuition as a way of knowing may vary with individuals, and thus, intuitive knowledge may not be accepted by some. A teacher may find it difficult to explain the process for reaching intuitive conclusions, and intuition does not lend itself to tests of validity. (Smith, 1964) For instance, in the earlier illustration about the houseful of six-year old children, it is entirely possible they have found a completely quiet way to keep themselves occupied; the mother's intuition may be wrong.

Above all though, rationalists never developed the universals to explain all the particulars. Confusion exists to this day on exactly what Plato meant by his "forms" or "ideals" and how they would give meaning to everything. (Shermis, 1967) Leonardo da Vinci died in despondency, not having found the universals. Descartes did much for mathematics, but it did not spawn the universals for all of life either. Though they and other rationalist philosophers across centuries optimistically

looked for unity of knowledge using men's ability to reason, they failed. (Schaeffer, 1976)

Empiricism

The first limitation for the empiricist becomes immediately obvious in the inductive method. It assumes you have sensed all the particulars needed to induce a valid conclusion. Going back to our chocolate tasting example, those who know about chocolate know I have not tasted all kinds of chocolate. I would be very surprised the next time I ate some if someone gave me a piece from a package labelled "unsweetened" used for baking. Going from particulars to universals can easily be flawed if one has not sensed in some manner all the particulars.

Many disagree with Locke's fundamental "clean slate" assumption. For instance, why from the very beginning do all babies cry when they want something like food? Why don't some raise their hand or nod their head or something else? Or on a slightly deeper question, why hasn't any parent ever had to teach their child to lie? Could there be something called innate knowledge or tendencies?

Empiricist philosophers have trouble living consistently with their own ideas. If Locke insists innate ideas do not exist and all knowledge is therefore based on sensory perception, how can he conclude there are "natural rights?" (Schaeffer, 1976) Hume questioned the concept of causality in the visible world, but Hume, himself, said:

> Should it be asked me whether I sincerely assent to this argument which I have been to such pains to inculcate, and

> whether I be really one of those skeptics who hold that all is uncertain...I...should reply...that neither I nor any other person was ever sincerely and constantly of that opinion...I dine, I play backgammon, I converse and am merry with my friends; and when, after 3 or 4 hours amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold and strained and ridiculous that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any further. (Schaeffer, 1979, p.133)

Pragmatism

According to two authors, pragmatists believe truth is what works in practice over the long run. (Brubacher, 1950; Wartofsky, 1971) However, many educators would reverse that; they would say educational theories work because they are first true. A pragmatist also says truth always changes. People of differing views would say truth never changes -- we simply do not know it completely in the first place. (Brubacher, 1950).

People of the Judeo-Christian philosophy and others have special problems with pragmatism since it is based strictly on men's experience and omits completely any reference to the supernatural. This leaves values without an absolute standard and thereby meaningless. There is no way to determine good and bad consequences other than what an individual or a society perceives for itself. (Harper, 1981) Followed to its logical conclusion, this leaves a society in which virtually anything can be justified.

An admittedly extreme example, but one which illustrates this point very well is Adolph Hitler's views on education. In

Mein Kampf, he documents his solution to a problem from his experience. The problem -- why did Germany lose World War I and suffer so badly as a result? The answer -- because of Jews and Marxists. The solution -- get rid of all Jews and Marxists and develop a pure German race. Thus, he wrote:

> The crown of the folkish state's entire work of education and training must be to burn the racial sense and racial feeling into the instinct and the intellect, the heart and brain of the youth entrusted to it. (Manheim, 1926/1943, p. 427)

Without absolute values a large number of other Germans adopted this position. German education swallowed Hitler's pragmatic viewpoint "hook, line and sinker." We know the result.

Another more recent example -- sex education in the U.S. The problem -- too many teenage pregnancies. The solution -- invest much money in "values neutral" sex education emphasizing contraception and abortion (the underlying assumption is teens will be promiscuous). In fact, "since 1970 the federal government has spent over $2 billion to promote condom usage and 'safe sex.'" (Dobson, 1992, p. 3) The results -- 57% of sexually active teens never use condoms; of the rest many use them improperly or occasionally; unwed pregnancies increased 87% for 18- and 19-year olds; the occurrence of venereal disease rose markedly. (Dobson, 1992) Past generations should not be venerated as faultless examples since they were not; however, when parents and teachers taught sex education within the framework of absolute values, the problems were not as prevalent.

Judeo-Christianity

Several questions arise when discussing revelation of any kind. Revelation is always assumed to be true without need for verification. Indeed, often revelation can not be explained by either rational or empirical means. Thus, faith is required to accept revealed knowledge as true. If faith is required, what happens if someone does not have faith? How can the knowledge be validated? How can we be sure the people to whom the knowledge was revealed can be trusted to communicate the revelation correctly? How do we know they are not lunatics? Also, our pluralistic society presents a key problem because of the religious nature of revelation -- how can the authority of revelation be brought into the public school classroom? (Shermis, 1967)

Other problems remain regarding the specific Judeo-Christian position on revelation, which are best characterized as a spectrum of views on the interpretation of revelation. People within various churches hold differing opinions about how much revelation is really true. For example, at one end of the spectrum, some hold the whole Bible must be entirely true and authoritative. Others believe the Bible to be true when it touches on "religious" issues; however, when it covers items dealing with history or science, then neither its veracity nor authority is guaranteed. Still others would say it is just a "guide" for everything. On another spectral issue, many would say the Bible must be true in all ethical or moral situations for all time while others would say you must apply it in light of

individual circumstances of each case. Many other specific issues arise, but the same principle holds -- for each question there is a range of possible positions. If these problems occur within the church itself, one can imagine the broader spectrum existing outside the church. And with this, how can there ever be agreement on what the universals really are?

Findings

At this point it would be easy to ask: what then are we left with? It seems we have several conflicting views, and as a result, we should conclude we can know some of the particulars by some means, but we can not know any ultimate meaning. Our problem at the moment may best be summarized by a recent "Calvin and Hobbes" comic strip. In a classroom setting two characters converse -- Calvin (a young, impish elementary student) and his "grandmotherly" teacher.

Frame 1 -- Teacher: "If there are no questions, we'll move on to the next chapter."

Calvin: "I have a question."

Frame 2 -- Teacher: "Certainly, Calvin, what is it?"

Calvin: "What's the point of human existence?"

Frame 3 -- Teacher: "I meant any questions about the subject at hand."

Calvin: "Oh."

Frame 4 -- Calvin (looking at book on his desk): "Frankly, I'd like to have the issue resolved before I expend any more energy on this." (Watterson, 1992, p. C4)

If we can not answer Calvin's question, his despairing quip in Frame 4 does not seem too far removed. Fortunately, I think there is a valid answer.

Two Theories of Knowledge

After separately discussing four major theories on knowledge, I suggest they be reduced to two basic positions. The first is that finite man, beginning from himself, whether it be through reason, sensory perception, experience, or whatever, can formulate general principles to understand and integrate all the particulars into a unified body of knowledge. As Protagoras said, "Man is the measure of all things." (Shermis, 1967, p. 130) The second is that finite man can not begin from himself, but because he is finite, he must rely on an infinite God to explain the universals. Indeed, Jean-Paul Sartre said the finite is useless without an infinite reference point. (Schaeffer, 1976)

If we look through the pages of philosophic thought from their recorded beginning, we see man has devoted himself to finding an answer for the questions of ultimate reality but has failed. Initially, men optimistically believed reason alone would settle the problem. When that failed, men forsook reason, but still could not discover consistent universals for a unified world view. (Schaeffer, 1976) Then came the pragmatist for whom "truth" is changing and the objective of knowledge is not absolute truth, but rather the "adequacy of concepts and theories as instruments of action." (Wartofsky, 1971, p. 425) Now even that weak view of "truth" is being abandoned by some more modern thinkers. Beyer, summarizing the work of Kuhns, Rorty and

Feyerabend, said the following:

> The notion of a scientific method is a myth that only inhibits knowledge and leads to dogmatic assertions in science, and to totalitarianism in political and social affairs...Both science and philosophy, it has been argued, are forced to give up their claims to providing epistemological foundations and certainty...Truth becomes supplanted by "warranted assertability," knowledge by judgment, and a-historicism by social pragmatism. The fall of the "queen of the sciences," [philosophy] like the dethroning of objective certainty, is to be accompanied by the celebration of more contextualized forms of human discourse. (Beyer, 1986, p. 125)

So it seems man, beginning from himself, has reached a rather logical, yet despairing conclusion after all these centuries -- his search for absolute truth has reached a dead end.

Metaphysics

When I described the Judeo-Christian viewpoint, I mentioned one author stated revelation was the only source of knowledge which required a metaphysical position. I disagree; all theories of knowledge require some kind of metaphysical base. Sartre summed it up best with his idea that the basic philosophic question is that something is there. (Schaeffer, 1972) So we must really begin the study of knowledge with two basic "givens" -- the universe in its orderly form and the uniqueness of man. If you find a system which can explain the two givens, then you have the universals to explain the particulars. As a result, you

then have a congruent and consistent metaphysical and epistemological system. I submit the Bible presents such an explanation.

When you look at all the possibilities to explain the existence of the universe and its form, there are really only three choices. First -- once there was absolutely nothing (no matter, energy, deity, personality, etc), and now there is something. Second -- there has always been an impersonal something (like matter or energy) from which everything we now see was derived by chance occurrences over a long period of time. Third -- there has always been a personal someone who created everything we now see. No one has ever seriously maintained the first choice. That leaves us two -- both of which must be believed by faith since there were no human observers. (Schaeffer, 1972) Our observations can, however, make our faith either substantive or a "leap in the dark."

Beginning with the impersonal plus time plus chance you have no explanation for the complexity of the universe or the personality of man. A serious look at evolution leaves too many holes -- no fossil evidence of missing links has been found at any level on the evolutionary chain all the way up to man. Complex life always appears fully formed even in the oldest geological strata. The first and second laws of thermodynamics also mitigate against evolution, as does mathematical probability. It becomes a leap in the dark. In contrast, much scientific evidence supports intelligent design by a creator. (Moore, 1970) The Bible presents a spatio-temporal metaphysical

description in Genesis, and Biblical writers later reaffirm this in many places as true history and not just fable. (Lockman Foundation, 1973)

The Bible also explains the uniqueness of man as being created by God in His image (this is vastly different than most world religions in which the gods were created by men in their image). It explains man's present situation as less than perfect through the account of the space-time fall. Thus, man is presently in an abnormal state -- not a normal one as presumed by most. Though perfect when created, men willingly rebelled against their Creator and now suffer real moral guilt. The truly hopeful answer to man's moral dilemma begins in Genesis 3 and is further illuminated throughout the remaining pages of the Old and New Testaments. (Lockman Foundation, 1973)

Thus, the totality of the Bible gives consistent, substantive answers to man's deepest questions, including the epistemological ones. Yes -- man can know absolute truth because God communicated with men who He made. He made men as language users, and therefore, it is not surprising that He communicates to men in language they can understand. It's not exhaustive truth -- we are still finite. But it is sufficient truth to operate in the physical world He also made. And man, the subject, can observe truth in the physical world, the object. There is no subject-object dichotomy; God made both.

Conclusion

Myriad educational implications of this view are too lengthy for full discussion in this paper, but I will briefly mention

three broad areas: (a) a proper view of responsibility for education, (b) a proper view of truth, and (c) a proper view of man individually and socially. First, the Bible gives primary responsibility for educating children to parents, not to schools or governments. (Lockman Foundation, 1973) Therefore, parents must be intimately involved in their children's education. This does not mean everyone should immediately start home schooling, but it does mean more parental involvement with their children and their children's teachers. Since men have been created as responsible beings, this also means that both teachers and students have responsibility in the learning process. (Harper, 1981)

Secondly, this position gives a proper view of truth. Teachers have real answers to real questions. There is truth which we can know -- we are not on a ferris wheel ride reaching for something we never find, only to be sent down and around endlessly. We do not have exhaustive answers, but we do have a framework within which to work. Calvin's teacher does have an answer for his question, and hopeful answers exist for others as well. I am reminded of a recent lecture I attended at which Robert Fulghum spoke to college students about motivation. His basic theme revolved around the old, old children's song about the "eensy, weensy spider" who kept getting washed down the water spout by the rain. Each time the sun would come back out, dry up all the rain, and the spider would start climbing again. His point, presented in a very entertaining way, was to keep climbing despite life's struggles. (Fulghum, 1992) My response was: how

depressing -- who said the rain would always stop? For many people, struggles never cease. Is the answer for them merely to keep "hoping" the struggle will end? If we do not have substantial, meaningful and true answers, we deceive those asking the questions.

A proper view of truth also means an absolute base for teaching values, a key ingredient missing in much of today's education. So-called "values neutral" education is anything but neutral. Under the guise of allowing students to set their own values, we actually foster the idea that anything goes. I submit that the rise in social problems in this country is due, at least in part, to this perspective. Thus, parents and teachers should teach and emulate values based on the Judeo-Christian standard.

A proper view of truth means truth can not be divided into the secular and the religious. The religious content of the Ten Commandments can not be separated from the history of the Israelites escaping from Egypt and wandering in the wilderness. In the same way, the religious underpinnings of the early years of our nation's development can not be separated from its secular history. Certainly, the Bible is not the place to go to organize the curriculum; however, its metaphysical and epistemological concepts must be the foundation for all that is taught. This, of course, presents the problem of curriculum content in a secular, pluralistic society (a complex problem for another paper).

Thirdly, a teacher with a proper view of man should have a realistic and compassionate view of his students, which extends beyond just educational goals. Students are not part of a

mechanistic evolutionary process. They have true worth and dignity. They have immeasurable potential. They are rational; learning is not by rote memory but by thinking, reflecting, understanding. They are social beings; therefore, interpersonal relationships are important and should be well nurtured. We must always realize men are not perfect -- neither the teacher nor the student. (Harper, 1981) Humility, patience and discipline are a few essential qualities needed by all.

The above implications are by no means an exhaustive or fully justified list, but they indicate the impact of a sound epistemological base. I do not suggest that adopting the Judeo-Christian view will be a panacea, a quick pill which causes everything to end "happily ever after." People are still finite, imperfect and different from one another. People will differ on the particulars, but there is room for disagreement while staying within the broad Judeo-Christian world view. The search for knowledge will still require hard work. However, you can reason, you can sense, you can live through experiences in anticipation of discovering something that is really true. Mankind and the physical universe are in correlation. The bottom line is this: the Judeo-Christian world view gives valid answers to the basic metaphysical, moral and epistemological questions -- no other system does. And these answers can strengthen the whole of life including education.

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